

A Tree for Me

(adapted from *Project Learning Tree* activity “Adopt a Tree”)

Objective:

Students make detailed observations about a specific tree and create writings and drawings to help them connect with the tree.

Standards of Learning:

Science “.1”s, English, Art

Materials:

- Clipboards, pencils, datasheets (older students) or plain paper (younger)
- Tree ID books (older students)
- Peeled crayons

In the Forest (or Schoolyard):

Choose an area of the forest that seems to have a lot of trees of the same size or same species. (One of the pine plantations is a good example.) Ask the students how all the trees in this area are alike. Then ask them what obvious differences they see. Tell them that while these trees do have much in common, each tree is an individual. They will be getting to know one of the trees very well.

Divide students into pairs, and give each pair a clipboard, pencil, data sheet, crayon, and ID book. Each pair must agree on one tree to study. Have them make detailed observations and investigations to complete “A Tree for Me” worksheets.

*Variation for younger students:

Have the class vote on a tree seen on their walk in the forest (or in the schoolyard) to be the “class tree”. Seat students around the tree and ask them for words that describe the tree. Write these down for use later in the classroom. Show students how to make bark rubbings by placing paper over the bark and rubbing with the side of a peeled crayon. Ask students to draw the tree, from any perspective. They can include animals that might use the tree. This drawing can be detailed if there is time, or just a sketch to complete and color later in class.

Back in the Classroom:

Have students pairs write a poem or paragraph using the 10 words they listed in the forest, plus any other information from the worksheet that they would like to include. The final poem should be attached to the “A Tree for Me” worksheet. Have pairs share their poems and some of their data with the class.

*Variation for younger students:

Allow students to finish their tree artwork. Write the descriptive words on the board. Then work together to write a poem about the tree, using as many of the words as possible.

Transcribe the poem onto large paper or posterboard, arranging the words into the shape of a tree. Post the poem on the wall, surrounded by the pictures the students drew.

A Tree for Me

Find out the official name of your tree (see book).
Also, give your tree a nickname.

Sketch any flowers, fruit, nuts,
or seed pods on the tree.

Is the tree alive? Is it healthy? Are there any signs of
damage, disease, or stress?

What animals or signs of animals do you see on the tree?

Sketch a leaf from the tree.

Write 10 words that describe your tree.

What is one interesting thing you noticed about your tree?

Sketch the tree either from a distance or
looking up from underneath.

Make a rubbing of the tree's bark here.